



WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council held September 9, 2009, for the purpose of receiving an update on the Animal Control Program.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:00 p.m. It was held in the Senior Classroom of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development; Susie Root and Laurel Derise, Animal Control Officers; Cindy Murray, City Clerk; Shannon Hoffman, News Review; Dr. Laura Kressler, Yohance Ford and Bill Orleans. Kim Deangeles, Animal Shelter Manager, joined the meeting at 8:42 pm.

Following introductions, Ms. Craze praised the staff of Animal Control for their efforts in making the City program the best type of government run animal control program. She also noted Dr. Kressler has been an invaluable resource to the program by providing guidance to staff regarding care, sheltering and treatment of the animals.

Trap/Neuter/Release (TNR) Program: Ms. Root and Ms. Derise explained the TNR program. Ms. Derise commented that Prince George's Feral Friends covers 90 percent of the medical costs for spay and neutering of the cats. Ms. Root said kittens and cats with the temperament to be socialized are held at the shelter for adoption.

Ms. Root commented that it is expected that the entire feral/free roaming cat program in the City will have been trapped and altered over the next several years which will cause a decline in the feral cat population as the cats live out their natural lives.

Adoptions: Ms. Root said the average length of a shelter stay has declined from six months to several weeks. She attributed this quick turnover to the consistent advertisement of available animals in the city's weekly News Review ad, flyers posted around the city, and the establishment of twice weekly regular hours during which the shelter is open.

Mayor Davis asked if there had been an increase in the number of abandoned animals. Ms. Root said a fair number of abandoned animals are found in Empirian Village. She added many animal owners, both resident and non-resident, voluntarily surrender animals to the shelter for various reasons. Dr. Kressler commented non-residents often bring the animals to Greenbelt because of the "no kill" policy of the shelter.

Volunteer Program: Ms. Root said the shelter has many volunteers who provide a significant resource to the program. She added that there are many other individuals who have offered to

volunteer but staff does not have the time to train and monitor them. Ms. Derise said they hope to recruit a volunteer coordinator to assist in the managing of the volunteers.

Mayor Davis asked if the shelter volunteers were recognized in any way. Ms. Root said a volunteer appreciation evening/open house is being considered.

Response and Communications: Ms. Craze explained the program is now fully staffed with an animal control officer on duty every day of the week, so calls for service are receiving prompt attention. She added that there is always an animal control officer on-call to handle emergencies.

Mr. Roberts asked if residents are directed to area wildlife sanctuaries in cases of injured wildlife. Ms. Root said animal control staff preferred to evaluate injured animals prior to making referrals. Dr. Kressler mentioned there were no wildlife sanctuaries in the immediate area, and very few in the entire state. Ms. Craze said that information on wildlife sanctuaries could be included on the animal control website which is currently being rebuilt.

Kennel Management: Ms. Root said having a staff member assigned as the shelter manager has resulted in better maintenance of the facility. She added that the animals are monitored much closer and outbreaks of kennel cough and other infections have been substantially reduced. Dr. Kressler commented that the kennels are maintained extremely well.

Veterinary Care: Ms. Root explained a partnership has been established with a visiting veterinarian who comes to the shelter once a week to perform general wellness checks and administer vaccinations. She added that the visiting veterinarian often brings a mobile surgical suite to the shelter and performs numerous spay/neuters during the visit.

Mayor Davis asked when animals are euthanized. Ms. Craze said only severely sick or aggressive animals are euthanized and the entire animal control staff participates in making the decision. She added that animals are never euthanized for space or convenience reasons.

Outreach and Community Development: Ms. Craze reported on fund raising events and adoption opportunities, along with the community events such as the Pet Expo and the Pooch Plunge.

Public Service: Ms. Craze mentioned the high service ethic of the animal control staff and noted several instances when extreme steps were taken to provide assistance to both animals and their owners.

Mayor Davis asked if the City should handle animal licensing. Ms. Craze commented the City would receive no benefits from providing this service and noted it would increase the workload of current staff.

Difficult Cases: There was discussion regarding vicious animal and neglect cases which had been handled by animal control.

Mayor Davis thanked the animal control staff for the meeting.

Mr. Orleans said he had observed the animal control van by a storage facility in Lanham. Ms. Root said a storage space at this location is used by animal control for storage of cages, food and other equipment.

Items of Information

Council discussed the recent Springhill Lake Elementary School gym closure due to structural problems. Mr. McLaughlin said Ms. McHale has a meeting scheduled with Ms. Jenkins on Friday and will discuss the possibility of the students using the Springhill Lake Recreation Center. Mr. Roberts suggested a letter should be written to the School Board regarding the gym closure and asked that the item be placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting

Mr. McLaughlin said he had been contacted by the Interim Director of the County Library System regarding possible use of an alternative location in case the Greenbelt Library has to close down during upcoming renovation work. He said a meeting will be scheduled in late September or Early October.

Mr. McLaughlin announced the results of a special election held in the City of Laurel yesterday.

The meeting ended at 10:19 p.m

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Manager*